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UNCLAS KUWAIT 003684

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARP, NEA/NGA SA/INS, DRL/PHD, DRL/ILA, G/TIP  
STATE FOR CA/OCS/ACS/NESA, M/P FOR JAY ANANIA  
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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: ELAB MOPS PREL PHUM ETRD EAID KU IZ RP

SUBJECT: PHILIPPINES REQUESTS KUWAIT RECONSIDER DECISION TO  
LIFT IRAQ TRAVEL BAN

REF: A. KUWAIT 3590

B. KUWAIT 3262

As reported in Ref A, the Government of Kuwait (GOK) informed the Governments of India, the Philippines, and Pakistan on October 19 that it would no longer prevent their nationals from entering Iraq from Kuwait. In the wake of that decision, local newspapers have reported that Manila has instructed the Philippines' Ambassador to Kuwait, Bayani Mangibin, to demarche the GOK and request that Kuwait reconsider this decision. The papers quote Philippine Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo as saying that "This is not the time to let Filipino drivers and other (overseas workers) go to Iraq because the situation is very fluid." Romulo is also reported to have said that "we can revisit the situation in Iraq after the elections." Filipino workers, on the other hand, are pleased with the GOK's decision, according to the English-language daily Arab Times. In an interview with the paper, truck driver Armando Torres, who is employed by a Kuwaiti company, commented that he and his coworkers believe that the financial benefits of working in Iraq outweigh the risks.

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